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ULYSSES S. GRANT

ADDRESS BY HON. LOUIS A. COOLIDGE

Before the Middlesex Club, Boston
April 27, 1917

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ADDRESS BY HON. LOUIS A. COOLIDGE BEFORE THE MIDDLESEX CLUB, BOSTON, APRIL 27, 1917.

Just what the qualities may be which give men rank with the immortals is likely to remain a mystery elusive as immortality itself. Some who have rendered noble service to humanity mean hardly more to us than numbers in a catalogue, while others of no greater seeming merit are clad in an imperishable glow. Among men grouped as equals in their day, one may become endowed in retrospect with flaming attributes not seen by those who knew him in the flesh, while all the rest soon shed such flickering glory as they had. The reason why, we do not understand. We cannot guess how myths originate or heroes grow.

Why Lincoln, who by most of his contemporaries was not thought to be cast in an heroic mould, should in a little while have towered so far above them all as to be classed among the world's divinities, would without doubt have puzzled him as it has puzzled some of us who venerate his name.

And so with Grant, who never thought to clothe himself in fame yet who in spite of his own modesty looms ever taller in the eye of time. Around his name no mystic legends cluster ; his memory exhales no subtle charm ; upon his brow no halo lies except the halo of hard fought success ; an unpretending man who played a chief part in the world's affairs, with the whole world looking on, yet so indifferent to praise or blame as to be quite unconscious of its stare.

No man who ever gained renown was ever more the sport of chance. No character in history has achieved supreme success in war or the supreme reward of politics who owed less to his own ambition or design. A still and simple citizen, accustomed mostly to the ways of unkempt Western towns, ungifted with imagination, indifferent to the general stir of things, and barely equal to the task of furnishing his family such modest comforts as the neighbors had, he was untouched even by evanescent liking for a military life up to the moment when he flashed across the vision of the world — the greatest captain of his time.

And when with war in retrospect he would have been content to live in quiet contemplation of his strange career, unskilled in politics, untutored in the art of government, he was compelled by force of circumstance for eight eventful years to occupy the highest civil place his countrymen could give. He was the child of splendid opportunities which came to him unsought, for which he never seemed to care, and which he met with calm assurance of his own capacity. He rode upon the turmoil which had tossed him to its top serenely confident in his ability to guide gigantic forces thrust into his hands. He saw his country reunited, well advanced upon a clearly marked and broadening road; then willingly went back to private life, rich only in the opulence of fame, unspoiled, unfretted by regrets, and undisturbed by dreams.

That this shy, silent man, after a humdrum life till middle age, should have beheld the span of his remaining years studded with triumphs and with tragedies offers a riddle to the student of his time. His mind was not attuned to notions of retreat, of indirection, or diplomacy. He thought straightforward and was free from artifice — rare qualities which stood him well in war and in most great executive emergencies, but were ill fitted to the sinuous ways of peace, the strategy of politics, the mysteries of high

finance, the subtle schemes of courtiers and dishonest satellites. And so it is that both as President and as private citizen the record of his truly great achievements is soiled with pages we would tear out if we could. Yet we should hate to lose the last heroic chapter, even though a sordid prelude is indispensable to the complete disclosure of unstained nobility of soul.

In what I have to say to you to-night I want to dwell on a few incidents which may throw light upon Grant's contradictory career, and most of which no doubt are known to you.

He went to West Point only because his father figured that would be the cheapest way for him to get an education. There was no lure for him in bugle call or roll of drums. He served throughout the war in Mexico; drudged for four years in barracks; then quit the army, somewhat in disgrace; farmed in Missouri; failed at that; tried real estate and failed at that; clerked in the St. Louis Custom House, and was dismissed; tried other things and failed in all; then worked a while for his two brothers in Galena. He never earned more than $1,000 in any single year, sometimes much less. He hoped in time to be a partner in his younger brother's store.

And then came Sumter and the call for troops! After the years of failure his opportunity was there at last—and so was he!

You all know how he trained the local company, refused its captaincy, and went to Springfield to see if there was anything which he could do; how he worked a while at filling order blanks and helped to drill raw companies of country boys, but being bred a soldier would not seek political endorsements for a chance to fight.

He told the Governor he didn't care for rank till he had earned it. "What kind of a fellow is this Captain Grant?" the Gov-

ernor asked one who knew him in Galena. "He evidently would like to serve but he wont try for any high position. What *does* he want?" "The way to handle him," was the reply, "is to ask him no questions, but simply order him to duty. He will obey." Then Governor Yates wired Grant, who had already gone away from Springfield, "You are this day appointed Colonel of the 21st Illinois Regiment." Grant answered simply: "I accept," and hurried back to take his new command.

McClellan, some years younger, was already Major General, the hero of the Northern press who were proclaiming him a new Napoleon. Lee, "Light Horse" Harry's son, sprung from an ancient line of landed aristocracy—regarded as the finest soldier on the continent—had refused command of all the Union forces and was at the head of the Confederate army. Grant, plainly born, unknown and friendless, so poorly off that he was forced to pledge his salary in advance to buy a uniform, was colonel of a ragged regiment months after the beginning of the combat of which he was to be the most gigantic figure in the end.

Where, until now, are we to find a more bewildering picture of the vicissitudes of war?

And always from the day that he was drilling country boys at Springfield up to the hour he stood with Lee at Appomattox he was the same straightforward, unpretentious citizen. He never asked for recognition or for rank. He never envied those who served with him or whom he served. He never failed in generosity toward those who fought for him or whom he fought. He rose from rank to rank without his scheming it in face of hindrances which would have baffled a designing man but which he seemed to overcome merely by overlooking them.

While McClellan in Virginia at the head of his great army had all eyes fixed upon his futile marchings back and forth, fate set

Grant down in Cairo with a detached command at the one key by pressing which the forces could be set in motion to surround and crush the armies of the South. For Cairo was the southern tip of Illinois and there the waters of the Middle West were joined to form the Mississippi, cutting the South in two, yet giving to the South so long as she could hold its banks a great strategical advantage which Federal successes in the east could hardly overcome.

Right here Grant's common sense — his substitute for genius — came in play. While others were of course aware that seizing points near where the rivers joined would be a step toward splitting the Confederacy, Grant saw the vital need of doing it at once with just the weapons in his hand before the South could mobilize her forces to confirm her hold. He thus achieved what others merely dreamed, translating into terms of conquest the cry which sounded through the armies of the west: "The rebels have closed the Mississippi; we must cut our way through to the Gulf by sword!"

Forts Donelson and Henry, on the Cumberland and Tennessee, only twelve miles apart where those two streams run parallel not far southeast of Cairo, marked the northern bound of the Confederacy; and Grant with military intuition saw that this was the one point to strike in order to push back the first line of the South's defense. Swiftly, without waiting for instructions, he seized first Henry and then Donelson. Indented at its peak the enemy's defensive line along the whole stretch from the Mississippi to the Alleghenies crumbled like a shell; the Union front was thrust miles nearer to the Gulf, the South was pressed back to its second line which ran from Memphis east through Chattanooga to eastern Tennessee. As the North saw one place and then another fall, it seemed like wizardry. But it was just what Grant had planned and what all military experts knew must follow, when once Fort Donelson was in our hands. There were more men at Donelson

than ever fought before upon our soil. It was the first substantial victory for the Union forces after nine months of pompous preparation and defeat. Grant, who had been unknown the week before outside his own department, was in a flash the military idol of the hour. While in the East our generals were paralyzed by strategy, out of the West had sprung a victory, a hero and a battle cry! Grant without planning it had sent a message which electrified the North. "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works."

It is a fascinating task to trace Grant's progress on the map and watch his grim pursuit of the Confederate forces in the West, seizing their strongholds one by one, smashing successively each line of their defense, tightening the coils around the enemy, eliminating as a factor to be reckoned with all territory save Virginia, all armies save that under Lee. Yet Halleck and McClellan clouded his first victory in punishment and every later triumph had for its prologue or its epilogue an angry chorus of impatience and abuse.

I shall not give a catalogue of battles. Let others better versed in military lore discuss details of strategy for which Grant had himself but little use. War as a game had no attractions for him. His meagre library had no military books. He studied tactics only for the task in hand. "I never maneuver," he once said to Meade; and, to another officer, "The art of war is simple enough. Find out where your enemy is! Get at him as soon as you can! Strike at him as hard as you can, and keep moving on!" Grant never was concerned about the opposition, considered only what he had to do himself, assumed the forces of the enemy would be as frightened as his own. "I am a smarter man than Grant," said Sherman. "I know a great deal more about war and about

everything else than he does ; but I'll tell you where he beats me and where he beats the world. I am always worrying about what the enemy is going to do. Grant never gives a damn!"

Of all Grant's battles Shiloh is the one in most dispute. But this is undisputed—that, however badly it was planned and though the loss in men was great, it marked a striking Federal advance and swept the armies of the Southwest back toward their last stand at Vicksburg.

Buell, landing on the river bank where stragglers huddled by the thousand the evening of the first disastrous day, asked Grant about his preparations for retreat and Grant replied that he had not had time to think of such a thing. "I know," said Buell, "but if you should be whipped, how will you get your men across the river? These transports will not take more than ten thousand troops!" "If I have to retreat," came the response, "ten thousand will be as many as I shall need transports for."

After the costly victory at Shiloh, Grant underwent a cruel test of loyalty and patience. He could have been in hardly worse repute had he betrayed his country. Halleck lumbered to the front, belittled him and laid him on the shelf, "second in rank" with merely nominal authority, subject to daily slights before the eyes of his own army. A storm of hot denunciation broke upon him. The press was shrill with shrieks of "Butcher Grant!" In Congress, Harlan cried out in debate that those who kept him in command would "carry on their skirts the blood of thousands of their slaughtered countrymen."

But Lincoln, who had never seen him, knew this of him,—which was not true of many — that he won battles, made no excuses or complaints, and never was involved in petty schemes to injure others or advance himself. So Lincoln said to those who

called for Grant's removal: "I can't spare this man; he fights!" "I rather like them an" he said, "I think we had better try him a little longer" and then he asked the brand of whiskey which Grant drank in order that he might send samples to his other generals.

And through it all Grant held his poise. "I should scorn being my own defender against such attacks," he wrote to Washburne, "except through the record which has been kept of all my official acts." And to old Jesse Grant he wrote: "I am sure I have but one desire in this war and that is to put down the rebellion. One enemy at a time is enough, and when he is subdued it will be time enough to settle personal differences."

Grant would have marched right on to Vicksburg which was then feebly garrisoned, and would have taken it, but his superiors had other plans; and when at last he had command again, time had been given the Confederate forces to recuperate. It took him a full year to make the ground which had been lost. And yet in spite of everything he kept on doggedly, trying one plan and then another, but always pushing on. He was on trial in Washington. Discontent was spreading through the North, discouraged by the months of dreary waiting west and east, and by reverses in Virginia. It was a dark hour for the Union cause.

Then he made up his mind to do a daring thing — to run the Vicksburg batteries and land his forces on the southern side, cutting his army boldly from its base and hazarding the future on a march through hostile territory from which there could be no retreat. Sherman and the other generals advised against it and Sherman wrote him a sharp letter to prevent it if he could; but Grant had made his mind up that it should be done.

How he landed with his army on the southern side; how in a flash he seized Port Gibson and with only three days' rations,

cutting loose from base, struck north for Vicksburg, feeding his army off the country as he rushed from fight to fight; how he cut Vicksburg off from its supplies; how in eighteen days he marched two hundred miles, won five pitched battles, took 8000 prisoners, scattered a hostile army larger than his own, and had the enemy locked up in Vicksburg, is a tale whose mere recital emblazons the chronicles of war. "This is a campaign," cried Sherman as he rode out with Grant and looked down on the bluffs where he had been repulsed five months before. "Until this moment I never thought your movement a success. But this is a success even if we never take the town!"

Even those who censured Grant now had to own the flawlessness of a campaign which has not been surpassed in history, and which belonged exclusively to Grant, not only in the whole but in its thousands of details; while Lincoln sent that gleaming note of thanks which ends: "I now wish to make the personal acknowledgment that you were right and I was wrong." After the town had fallen Grant handed back to Sherman silently the letter Sherman wrote against his plan, and never later spoke of it to him or anybody else. The knightly friendship of these men plays like a ray of sunlight upon the clouded face of civil war.

Though Grant's career had ended then, his fame was safe, for subsequent defeat could not have spoiled the record of his high achievement. No matter what had gone before or what might happen after Vicksburg, he now had confidence in his own destiny. He felt that he would be the one to bring the war to a successful end. Vicksburg had been before his eye at Cairo and it had now come honestly to him at last among the great array of Union generals who had in the beginning more prestige. He had cleared up the Mississippi from Cairo to the Gulf. It was the successful

culmination of our first grand strategy and men began to think of Grant as first among our generals.

And now a greater opportunity was at his hand. The southern line had been pushed east as far as Chattanooga, and Rosecrans was cooped up there after his rout at Chickamauga, strongly entrenched but cut off from supplies by Bragg whose eager army held the hills above the town. Food and fuel were getting scarce, his horses starving, winter coming on. His idle army was demoralized and he seemed dazed. He must be superseded in order to escape a great catastrophe. So Stanton made a new division comprising the whole middle south and west, and placed Grant in command. Grant rushed toward Chattanooga over swollen roads, relieving Rosecrans while on the way and putting Thomas in his place.

A swift change came with his arrival. "That night," says Horace Porter, "after sitting absolutely silent for a while listening attentively to what the others said and following on the map the disposition of the troops, he straightened in his chair and began firing questions at his new subordinates, pertinent, incisive, comprehensive. . . . He was as always eager to push on." Then turning to a table he wrote dispatches for an hour; and the next night again he wrote dispatches rapidly with his own hand, disposing troops throughout his new command, summoning Sherman, Hooker and his other generals and planning to cut through a "cracker line" to Nashville for supplies. Within five days there was no further danger of starvation or surrender or retreat. He could hold the town all winter or till reinforcements should arrive.

And then there broke for Grant the most resplendent day of his career. He had no thought of holding Chattanooga with hostile guns surveying him complacently from neighboring heights.

He waited only until Sherman should arrive from Mississippi and Hooker from the East. Then he leaped out at the enemy. The three days' fight of Chattanooga is the most completely planned of all his battles — a feat unmarred in its perfection and as a spectacle unequalled in the history of war. The secrecy and skill of the preliminary strategy, the military panorama with its sublime scenic setting unrolled before the eyes of Grant and Thomas, posted on Orchard Knob, watching their armies in glittering pageant, march to undimmed success, the glimpse of Hooker and his men fighting "above the clouds," the marvelous charge of Sheridan and Wood with nearly twenty thousand bayonets up to the very top of Missionary Ridge, mowing the enemy like wheat, the panic-stricken flight of Bragg's astonished troops, the frantic joy and tumult of the victorious Union army as Grant rode down the lines, blend in a battle picture with no parallel.

Knoxville was saved at Chattanooga and eastern Tennessee was cleared. The coils were pressing tighter upon Lee. A stir of the inevitable ran through the North.

It was at once proposed that Grant be made Lieutenant General, but when Grant learned of it he wrote to Washburne who had introduced a bill: "I feel under many obligations to you but recollect that I have been highly honored already by the Government, and do not ask or feel that I deserve anything more in the shape of honors or promotions. A success over the enemy is what I crave above everything else." But notwithstanding this the bill was passed. Lincoln gave Grant the rank and he was General-in-Chief of all the armies of the United States.

Before Grant left for Washington to take command he did a gracious and great-hearted thing. He wrote to Sherman a letter which will live as long as his and Sherman's memories endure:

"What I want is to express my thanks to you and McPherson as the men to whom, above all others, I feel indebted for whatever I have had of success. How far your advice and assistance have been of help to me, you know, how far your execution of whatever has been given to you to do entitles you to the reward I am receiving, you cannot know as well as I."

And here is Sherman's generous reply: "You do McPherson and myself too much honor. At Belmont you manifested your traits, neither of us being near. At Donelson, also, you illustrated your whole character. I was not near, and McPherson in too subordinate a capacity to influence you. . . . I believe you are as brave, patriotic, and just as the great prototype, Washington; as unselfish, kindhearted, and honest as a man should be; but the chief characteristic is the simple faith in success you have always manifested, which I can liken to nothing else than the faith the Christian has in the Saviour. This faith gave you victory at Shiloh and Vicksburg. Also, when you have completed your best preparations, you go into battle without hesitation, as at Chattanooga — no doubts, no reserve, — and I tell you, it was this that made us act with confidence. I knew, wherever I was, that you thought of me; and if I got in a tight place you would come — if alive."

Grant's coming to the Capital which he had never seen was like him. No one met him. No one knew him. He had no staff. A short and slight stoop-shouldered man, in rusty uniform, walked to the desk at the hotel and registered, "U. S. Grant and Son, Galena, Illinois." That was all. But it was always so with him; for even in his greatest moments he was devoid of pride. He was a marvel of simplicity, his manner plain and placid, almost meek. He had no military bearing, when walking pitched along as though another step might plunge him forward on his nose; and as he

had no sense of rhythm never marched or paid the least attention to the music of the bands.

And yet there was another side, for while his utterance was slow, sometimes embarrassed, he used well chosen words which never left the slightest doubt of what he meant to say. He was singularly pure, in thought, in habit and in speech. His voice was musical, distinct, low, vibrant, penetrating. His sharp cut mouth expressive both of strength and sweetness was set at times with a rigidity like that of fate. He discussed ordinary themes with interest and turned from them without a shade of difference in tone or manner to decisions which involved the fate of armies, of himself or of the state. In planning he could not be hurried. In his conclusions he could not be moved. In battle he was swift, decisive and unerring, ruthless as flame.

This was the new chief of all the Union forces in command of more than half a million men who, setting out upon his last campaign to crush the armies of the South and bring an end to war, bore with him to the front these parting words from Lincoln: "I wish to express in this way my entire satisfaction with what you have done up to this time, so far as I understand it. The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant; and, pleased with this, I wish not to obtrude any constraints or restraints upon you. If there is anything wanting which is within my power to give, do not fail to let me know. And now with a brave army and a just cause, may God sustain you."

"It shall be my earnest endeavor that you and the country shall not be disappointed," was Grant's reply. "Should my success be less than I desire or expect, the least I can say is, the fault is not with you."

It has been said that for the North the war began with Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Till then the time was spent in training generals and armies and picking the right man to lead. Campaigns had been haphazard, a summer's fighting and a winter's rest, a victory or defeat — and then withdrawal to recuperate. There had been no comprehensive military plan, no fixed and certain aim.

But now there came a change. The task Grant set himself was to destroy Lee's army. That done, rebellion must disintegrate. With Lee eliminated the Confederacy would crumble of itself. To occupy the Southern Capital had sentimental value, but in Grant's plan it was subordinate, not the main purpose of his strategy. "On to Richmond!" had been the Northern cry till Grant's arrival. After he came the aim was to get Lee. "Lee's army will be your objective point," he ordered Meade. "Wherever Lee goes, you will go also." When once Lee should capitulate, Richmond must also fall. With Lee at large his tent was the real heart of the Confederacy.

The two days' battle of the Wilderness with its ghastly toll brought home to Grant the horror of the path in which his feet were set. It was a bitter test of fibre. Disaster never pressed him quite so hard. But he could not turn back. Lee with his hard fought forces for a third time lay near the Rapidan facing a hostile army on its southern side. He had twice seen the Army of the Potomac, once under Pope, once under Hooker, pushed back across the stream, but now he saw an enemy which had failed to break his lines crouched for another spring. Grant in the opening encounter, disastrous though it seemed, had forced his army forward and held his advance. He had lost heavily, but Lee had suffered more.

The next night without a rest Grant grimly headed South. As he rode in the dusk in silence along his shattered ranks, his

worn and wounded soldiers saw which way his face was turned and rose up from the ground with cheers. This mute assurance of immediate advance, after their long acquaintance with retreat, inspired them with a trust in their new chief which held them to the end. "I shall take no backward steps," Grant wrote to Halleck. For thirty days he hammered at the enemy, rained heavy blows upon Lee's head; hurled his men frequently against Lee's weakening lines, defied the rules of war by frontal charges on the enemy intrenched, costing both armies dearly in the toll of wounds and death. Lee was forced backward step by step on Richmond, returning blow for blow, the two contending armies leaving a trail of carnage along the dreadful road. "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer," Grant had said, and he kept fighting on.

For Lee it was a new and strange experience. This master in the artistry of war now found his match in one less skilled in tactics but stronger in offense and in tenacity. No matter how he played his tempered sword, no matter how he turned and stepped with faultless strategy, there stood Grant facing him like a decree of Fate.

Then came the swift and silent march around Lee's flank for fifty miles across the James toward Petersburg, the watch at City Point, the siege of Petersburg, the gloomy summer months which were the darkest of the war, the fixing of a day of prayer, the horrified appeal that Grant be superseded by McClellan, and Lincoln's telegram to Grant who said he did not want to break his hold: "Neither am I willing. Hold on with a bull-dog grip and chew and choke as much as possible." And then the last swift blow was struck by Sheridan, Lee's men filed out of Petersburg by night, and Davis fled from Richmond.

To Richmond Lincoln went from Petersburg ; not Grant, for Grant was busy following the enemy in their retreat until at last he asked for their surrender. And then Grant came to Appomattox Court House and entered the brick dwelling where Lee and his great hour awaited him.

The story has been written many times, but no American can weary of its telling. Lee, dressed immaculately in a uniform of gray which emphasized his faultless bearing and his noble form ; Grant, in a private's blouse, soiled with much riding, on which were sewn the shoulder straps simply to let his soldiers know his rank ; Lee, carrying a handsome sword, but Grant with none.

Grant talked awhile of ordinary things, ignoring the momentous theme that brought them there and gently leaving that for Lee to introduce, — about old army times, service in Mexico, where he was a subaltern and Lee Scott's chief of staff — till Lee, reminding him that they had business in hand, said he had asked the interview to learn the terms it was proposed to give. Then, turning to a table, Grant wrote as he was wont to write, swiftly and clearly without erasure, not knowing when he took his pen what the first word would be but knowing what was in his mind and wishing to express it unmistakably, those terms the chivalry of which enshrines the record of our Civil War.

Then Lee went out, and as he passed the aids who had been waiting on the steps arose respectfully. He did not seem to notice them, but looking over the green valley toward his surrendered army he smote his hands abstractedly until his orderly led up his horse. He took the bridle. Grant walked by and touched his hat and Lee, returning the salute in silence, rode back to his own lines, then home to lay aside his uniform.

That afternoon Grant wired to Stanton three bare lines inform-

ing him of Lee's surrender. When his men learned what had been done, they would have fired salutes but they were stopped by Grant. He would not add to the distress of a defeated foe. *He did not set his foot in Richmond.*

Thus the war ended, a gentle spirit pervading the spent armies North and South, due in chief measure to the generosity of Grant, who shortly after received his army's salutation in the solemn pageant of the Grand Review, crowned with the glory of his country's gratitude.

Here if the tale should end to many it might seem complete, yet it would only half be told. For we must bear in mind that Grant had two distinct careers, each in its own right meriting a place in history. With one of them biographers have not been niggardly. What they have written has enriched his fame; but with the other they have been less kind. It has not been the literary fashion to commend him much for his achievements after Appomattox; yet his success as an Executive in time of peace is hardly less significant than his success in war. This Club remembers him to-night not altogether as a soldier, but as a great Republican and President.

At the crest of his renown Grant found himself in Washington encumbered with high military rank but shorn of power. He had to deal in strange surroundings with politicians whom he did not know, struggling with questions altogether new. Sumner, Stevens, Wade and Butler were forcing on the South the tragic blunder of universal suffrage for the newly liberated slaves; Johnson was besmirching his ill-fated term; and in an atmosphere of passion and intrigue Grant, after forty years obscurity and four years in camp, had his first taste of politics.

When he was named for President he added as an afterthought to his brief letter of acceptance: "Let us have Peace." These

words became a motto; but through his term he had no peace himself. Sumner quarreled with him, at first on San Domingo, then on Motley, finally on every other question that arose; and others with more sentiment than knowledge of conditions adopted Sumner's view largely because of his prestige.

Had Sumner been of different temper things would have been quite otherwise, and so they might if Grant had had more skill in handling men of various sorts; but Sumner notwithstanding his nobility of purpose was morally superior in manner, rhetorical and vain, while Grant though tolerant and sane was lacking in a humorous touch which Lincoln had and which enabled Lincoln to make allowance for divergent tastes. Sumner had disapproved of Lincoln, as now he disapproved of Grant, and was a thorn in Lincoln's side; but Lincoln had political sagacity combined with diplomatic skill, while Grant with all his magnanimity had little social sense or tact. It was impossible for him to do what Lincoln did in making use of men of Sumner's kind.

Grant has been blamed for letting Motley go; but Motley was a writer, not a diplomat. He was a hindrance to negotiations in which he should have been an aid. Events have justified Grant's policy toward San Domingo, although the manner of his handling it may have been wrong. And so with other things which Sumner made much of. The record shows that Sumner viewed Grant's conduct through distorted eyes. Yet Sumner's unjust prejudice has colored history, because the men most close to Grant were not in the good graces of the literary craftsmen upon whom has devolved the writing of the story of the time.

Grant liked and trusted Conkling, Chandler, Logan, Morton, whose faults were manly faults, because he was himself a manly man. Although they were not always nice in method they were

straightforward, honest and constructive. They did not deal in visions, nor did he. They were like him in having no pet theories. They were intensely loyal. So was he. They were primarily Republicans, and so was he. He could not comprehend the mental attitude of men like Godkin, Bryant, Schurz and Bowles, who all had high ideals but were without constructive force and had no sense of personal or party fealty in politics. They could not work together much among themselves; how could they hope to work with him? They could not see that though he had not much to say he had progressive and far-reaching policies; that while their microscopic eyes were hunting blemishes he was forever pushing on.

Grant did not seek the easy fame which comes to the crusader; he had no mission to reform the ways of other men. As President he kept about him those he liked, nor can we blame the faith with which he clung to them.

"Grant was the only man I ever knew," says Sniffen who was eight years at his side, "upon whose promise you could safely go to sleep. He never failed to keep his word even in the smallest things. If once he pledged himself you could dismiss it from your mind, and travel round the world. It would be done." This trait of constancy contributed to his success, but sometimes brought him bitterness of soul. He had the unsuspecting chivalry of friendship; throughout his life his sympathy went out to those he thought the victims of injustice; his instinct was to shield them from attack. In the grim chase of justice his heart ran with the fox, not with the hounds.

For eight tumultuous years he guided the Republic with a steady hand and at the end of his administration the United States stood higher in the estimation of the world than it had ever stood before. Those eight years mark a great constructive period in our history — the greatest since the day of Hamilton and Washing-

ton ; and ever since we have been building our prosperity on the foundations which Grant laid.

"His services attest his greatness," Conkling said. "His fame was earned, not by things written but by the arduous greatness of things done." He upheld our national credit and guarded our national honor ; sustained our dignity and maintained our rights. He vetoed the Inflation Bill and put through the Resumption Act. To him immeasurably more than any other man is due the fact that every paper dollar is as good as gold. He stood for a Protective Tariff and a great Merchant Marine. He was the first of all our Presidents to recognize the principle of Civil Service Reform, the first to sound a warning against the peril of an ignorant electorate. He greatly reduced the national debt and lowered the national taxes. He had a strong, far-seeing foreign policy. In the midst of difficulties he kept peace with all the world. He was firm with Spain, with Mexico, with France, with England, respecting no distinction between weak and powerful governments where national honor was at stake.

Throughout Grant's term our country held high rank among the nations of the earth ; and an American could count with certainty on their respect. We then stood higher in the world's regard than at any other moment since the government began. And finally to his unflinching fairness was largely due the peaceful settlement of the succession, when vacillation in the White House would have brought on Civil War.

Divested of his rank and office he found himself once more the looming figure of his time. The venom of attack was dissipated with the loss of power. There was no more talk of Caesarism, nepotism or corruption. The folly of the first was obvious, now that the "Caesar" pictured by the party press had gone back

cheerfully to private life. The silliness of the attacks on nepotism was manifest now that the little flock of office holding relatives found their petty titles and emolument at the disposal of a President on whom they had no claim. As for corruption and gift taking, here was Grant at the close of sixteen years of public service, in such financial straits that he was puzzled how to get along.

He made his tour around the world and was received as the most famous living general, personifying in the eyes of Europe the marvel of democracy. He talked with Bismarck and Von Moltke, Gambetta, Gortschakoff and Castelar, with kings and queens and emperors, the Czar, the Pope, and then came home in personal triumph to political defeat.

We come now to the closing page of his career,— the dismal tragedy of his adventure into high finance, the sordid scheming of the scoundrel Ward. Grant, lured by specious promises, unconscious of impending fate, was looking forward to prosperity in his remaining years. Surrounded by his family and trophies he planned to end his days in profitable ease. He had no public cares or aspirations, no lingering restlessness for power; his skies were clear of clouds; he was content.

One morning, when he limped into the office of his firm, he was stunned by his son's greeting: "Grant & Ward have failed and Ward has fled!" He turned away without a word, ascended slowly to his private room and late that afternoon the cashier found him sitting there, close to his desk, clasping his chair convulsively, head bowed. Everything he thought he owned was swept away. He could not buy a meal. He was too proud and silent to ask for credit then.

Stripped of his livelihood, harassed by debts, chagrined by failure, smarting under unjust stings, feeble in body, with age creeping on, Grant faced the world. And yet his bitterness of soul

was sanctified. His bearing in adversity beatified him in the world's regard.

It developed that he had a hopeless malady. His life thenceforward was a fight with death. For months he could not lie in bed, but sat propped up in chairs, suffering excruciating pain. And yet in spite of this he set about his Memoirs and grimly turned to his new, unfamiliar task. He would complete his work for his own sake, his family, and those to whom he was in debt. But when there came the verdict that he could not recover, he was in mental agony; not that he had to die, but that he might not live till he cleared his name.

Let us not prolong the story. Its plain recital cuts one like a knife. He kept at work upon his book, dictating when he could not speak above a whisper, more often pencilling his sentences on pads. The passages he wrote in the last weeks were just and lucid. They read so simply that we can hardly realize how every paragraph was drenched in pain. He did not drop his pencil till his life's work was done.

Here let us leave a man who had no worse fault than his honest innocence; who had few greater virtues than the loyalty for which he was most harshly blamed; whose triumphs had their root in suffering and whose misfortunes sprang from his success; who, loving peace, drank deep of war, and with its bitter dregs baptized anew the peace he loved; who, unstirred by self seeking, was glorified through loss of self in a great aim; and who though humbly born and unaspiring walks in the noble march of history ahead of kings.

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